

DO WHAT YOU CAN.

BY WM. D. FURRY.

Hanging on the wall, in front of my seat at the table there hangs a picture, representing Mary anointing Jesus with the precious ointment. Daily do we behold this picture, and daily do our minds revert to that day, when in the house of Simon in Bethany, the act occurred, and those consoling, encouraging words of Jesus, "She hath done what she could," loom up before us.

We have in this story as told by Mark (xiv chapter), an illustration of the way in which a plain, unassuming woman, but a profoundly christian one, manifested her love toward her Saviour.

Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, whose home was in Bethany, offered to Jesus, a token of her personal affection and confidence, in what seemed to her a very insignificant thing to do.

She had an Alabaster box of costly ointment made from the roots of the East Indian *Nard*, which, in Oriental countries, was used to refresh and exhilarate, which she brought and poured upon Jesus.

Some of the disciples became indignant at what they called the wasting of the precious ointment, saying that it could be sold for 300 pence, and the money bestowed upon the poor.

The blessed Master rebuked them saying "She hath done what she could;" a noble testimony embodying a principle of much significance.

Mary was not one of those who could do what we would term *great things*; yet says Olhausen, "She has erected to herself an eternal monument as lasting as the eternal Word of God."

The lesson is a very significant one. We may not be able to do what we would term great things; but we can do something; and there is something for everyone to do. Lowell says "No man is born into this world whose work is not born with him; there is work, and strength to work therewith for all who will."

Our work may not be such as to make our lives conspicuous, but whilst every life cannot be a conspicuous one, every life can be a beautiful one.

"Sculptors of life are we as we stand
With our lives uncarved before us."

Too many, we fear, forget that for which they are working, and in so doing the little things are ignored.

We are working for the approval of God, not the praise of men. Some again, entertain the idea, that it is impossible for them to do anything, in that they have no intellectual power or wealth to throw into the work. They have not yet learned the lesson of Jesus. "Do what you can."

Had Mary sought the praises of men, she would never have used her ointment as she did, nor won for herself such divine approval.

Many of the most precious deeds of a true Christian, are the small acts of his life, as the giving a cup of cold water to a weary disciple, or the speaking a word in due season.

No man ever lived in so small a sphere, that he could not at sometime be helpful to some one in word or deed. But in the struggle for greatness (?) those things, the doing of which bring to the doer true greatness, are overlooked.

The true idea of greatness is to be found only in the life of Jesus, who went about doing good to all classes and conditions, his outward life being the natural expression of himself.

Man's true greatness is in himself. A man can be great only as he is in harmony with his nature and God, and who, like Jesus, works for God's glory and not men's praises.

Under certain circumstances the smaller the gift, the greater the evidence of love. To have poured the ointment on the feet of Jesus, was an evidence of greater love to him, than to have spread a feast like Simon, the Pharisee.

Mary with her ointment, the widow with her mite, Peter dropping his net and following Jesus, these are truer acts of benevolence, than the financial gifts of Pratt, Peabody, Cooper or Stanford.

Great men and women are needful to the progress of society, but not more than the "Marys" the "widows" or the "Peters" who perform their humble tasks with serene faith and unanswering fidelity.

A general leads forth his forces to

battle, and if victorious, comes away bearing all the laurels; but who is there so base and ignorant, as to ignore the fact that it was the faithful performance of each private's duty that won the victory.

No man or woman can measure the good which has been accomplished by Christian men and women each doing what he or she could. The scroll of true heroes will never be known in this world. But thanks to an allwise, and merciful God, they will be known in heaven, and of them will it be said "They have done what they could."

How prone are we even to overlook those in the humbler stations of life, and the work they are accomplishing for God and humanity; even as in walking over this wave-washed, rock-ribbed earth of ours, when we become awe struck with wonder at the lofty mountains, whose crest forms our horizon, and which is empurpled by the setting sun, and upon which the clouds seem to rest, when we forget the graceful fern, and the flowers which are woven into a carpet of many hues for our feet. Whilst we admire the one we ignore the other.

We forget that the same force which lifted the mountains from the valley, has fashioned also the delicate herbage at our feet.

So our friends, it requires the same spirit to perform either a small or great act; God looks upon the spirit or motive which prompts the doing of the act; but man looks upon the act alone.

It was the spirit of love in which Christ did all his works; and the same spirit must be in all his workers. Christ so loved mankind that he gave himself for it; this was the measure of his love and his workers to possess this attribute must give themselves.

Love must shine out toward all in our acts; and as the world progresses in the true sense, service must be recognized as the expression and triumph of love.

We need not be discouraged because we live nearer the ground than the sky. Too many people want to live in the higher spheres than others, and in all such cases the sphere is much too high for such kind of persons.

Our prime duty is to recognize what we are able to do well, and not fret